

$0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decay triggered directly by the Majorana neutrino mass

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Abstract

We treat $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays taking into account recoil corrections to the nuclear currents. The decay probability can be written as a quadratic form of the effective coupling constants of the right-handed leptonic currents *and* the effective neutrino mass. We calculate the nuclear matrix elements for the $0^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays of ^{76}Ge and ^{100}Mo , and demonstrate that the *relative* sensitivities of $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+$ decays to the neutrino mass and the right-handed currents are comparable to those of $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+$ decays.

The neutrinoless double beta ($0\nu\beta\beta$) decay can take place through an exchange of neutrino between two quarks in nuclei if the electron neutrino is a Majorana particle and has a nonvanishing mass and/or right-handed couplings [1–3]. There may be other possible mechanisms such as those involving supersymmetric particles which also cause the decay of two neutrons into two protons and two electrons [4–6]. In the present work, however, we restrict ourselves to the conventional two-nucleon and Δ mechanisms of $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay through light Majorana neutrino exchange. From the analyses of experimental data on $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays, stringent limits on the effective neutrino mass and the effective coupling constants of the right-handed leptonic currents have been deduced (see *e.g.* [3,7] and the references quoted therein). On the other hand it still seems to be believed widely that $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays are sensitive only to the right-handed currents. In view of the theorem that the electron neutrino should have a nonvanishing Majorana mass if $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay occurs anyway [8–10], an observation of $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay due to right-handed interactions would certainly mean also a nonvanishing Majorana mass of the electron neutrino. The purpose of the present work is, however, not to investigate the role of the

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Majorana neutrino mass in such a sense, but to demonstrate that it causes $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays directly.

A direct contribution of the neutrino mass to $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays was considered in [3] taking into account the nuclear recoil currents, and the inverse half-life was given as

$$[\tau_{1/2}^{0\nu}(0^+ \rightarrow 2^+)]^{-1} = F_{1+}(Z_{1+})^2 + F_{1-}(Z_{1-})^2 + F_{2+}(Z_{2+})^2 + F_{2-}(Z_{2-})^2, \quad (1)$$

where $F_{j\pm}$ ($j = 1, 2$) are the phase space integrals and

$$\begin{aligned} Z_{1\pm} &= M_\lambda \langle \lambda \rangle - M_\eta \langle \eta \rangle \pm M_m \frac{\langle m_\nu \rangle}{m_e}, \\ Z_{2\pm} &= M'_\eta \langle \eta \rangle \pm M_m \frac{\langle m_\nu \rangle}{m_e}, \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

with the electron mass m_e and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle m_\nu \rangle &= \sum_j' U_{ej}^2 m_j, \\ \langle \lambda \rangle &= \lambda \sum_j' U_{ej} V_{ej}, \\ \langle \eta \rangle &= \eta \sum_j' U_{ej} V_{ej}. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Here m_j is the mass of the eigenstate Majorana neutrino N_j . U_{ej} and V_{ej} are the amplitudes of N_j in the left- and right-handed electron neutrinos, λ and η the coupling constants of the right-handed leptonic current with the right- and left-handed hadronic currents, and the summations should be taken over light neutrinos ($m_j \ll 100$ MeV). The nuclear matrix elements M_α ($\alpha = \lambda, \eta, m$) are defined by

$$M_\alpha = \langle 2_F^+ \| \frac{1}{2} \sum_{n,m} \tau_n^+ \tau_m^+ (\mathbf{M}_\alpha)_{nm} \| 0_I^+ \rangle. \quad (4)$$

The explicit forms of the two body operators \mathbf{M}_λ , \mathbf{M}_η and \mathbf{M}'_η were given in [11] including the contribution of the Δ mechanism, in which the $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay proceed through an exchange of a Majorana neutrino between two quarks in the same baryon in a nucleus. On the other hand the operator \mathbf{M}_m was derived in [3] as

$$(\mathbf{M}_m)_{nm} = -\frac{1}{2} i m_e \left\{ [\mathbf{r}_{nm} \otimes (\boldsymbol{\sigma}_n C_m - \boldsymbol{\sigma}_m C_n)] \right\}^{(2)}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
& +i(g_V/g_A)[\mathbf{r}_{nm} \otimes (\mathbf{D}_n \times \boldsymbol{\sigma}_m - \mathbf{D}_m \times \boldsymbol{\sigma}_n)]^{(2)} \\
& + (g_V/g_A)^2[\mathbf{r}_{nm} \otimes (\mathbf{D}_n - \mathbf{D}_m)]^{(2)} \} H(r_{nm}), \tag{5}
\end{aligned}$$

where $\mathbf{r}_{nm} = \mathbf{r}_n - \mathbf{r}_m$, $H(r)$ is the neutrino propagation function, g_V and g_A the vector and axial vector coupling constants. C_n and \mathbf{D}_n are the recoil correction terms to the axial vector and vector nuclear currents [2,12] given by

$$\begin{aligned}
C_n &= (\mathbf{p}_n + \mathbf{p}'_n) \cdot \boldsymbol{\sigma}_n / 2M, \\
\mathbf{D}_n &= [\mathbf{p}_n + \mathbf{p}'_n - i\mu_\beta \boldsymbol{\sigma}_n \times (\mathbf{p}_n - \mathbf{p}'_n)] / 2M, \tag{6}
\end{aligned}$$

where \mathbf{p}_n and \mathbf{p}'_n are the initial and final nucleon momenta, M the nucleon mass, and $\mu_\beta = 4.7$. The above expression for \mathbf{M}_m is, however, not suitable for numerical calculations as it stands. Therefore, as was done for \mathbf{M}_λ , \mathbf{M}_η and \mathbf{M}'_η in [11], we expand it in terms of the operators \mathbf{M}_{inm} with simpler spin and orbital structures,

$$(\mathbf{M}_m)_{nm} = \sum_i C_{mi} \mathbf{M}_{inm}. \tag{7}$$

We define the matrix element M_i of the operator \mathbf{M}_{inm} analogously to Eq. (4). The coefficients C_{mi} and the two-body operators \mathbf{M}_{inm} are listed in Table 1, where

$$\begin{aligned}
h &= r_{nm} H(r_{nm}), & h' &= -r_{nm} H'(r_{nm}), \\
\mathbf{S}_{\lambda nm} &= [\boldsymbol{\sigma}_n \otimes \boldsymbol{\sigma}_m]^{(\lambda)}, & \mathbf{S}_{\pm nm} &= \boldsymbol{\sigma}_n \pm \boldsymbol{\sigma}_m, \\
\mathbf{y}_{Knm} &= [\hat{\mathbf{r}}_{nm} \otimes \hat{\mathbf{r}}_{nm}]^{(K)}, & \mathbf{Y}_{Knm} &= [\hat{\mathbf{r}}_{nm} \otimes \hat{\mathbf{r}}_{+nm}]^{(K)} (r_{+nm}/r_{nm}), \\
\mathbf{y}'_{Knm} &= i[\hat{\mathbf{r}}_{nm} \otimes \mathbf{p}_{nm}]^{(K)}, & \mathbf{Y}'_{Knm} &= i[\hat{\mathbf{r}}_{nm} \otimes \mathbf{P}_{nm}]^{(K)}, \\
\mathbf{r}_{+nm} &= \mathbf{r}_n + \mathbf{r}_m, & \hat{\mathbf{a}} &= \mathbf{a}/|\mathbf{a}|, \\
\mathbf{p}_{nm} &= \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{p}_n - \mathbf{p}_m), & \mathbf{P}_{nm} &= \mathbf{p}_n + \mathbf{p}_m. \tag{8}
\end{aligned}$$

As was described in detail in [11], \mathbf{M}_λ and \mathbf{M}_η can be expanded in terms of \mathbf{M}_{inm} with $1 \leq i \leq 5$, $8 \leq i \leq 13$, and \mathbf{M}'_η in terms of \mathbf{M}_{inm} with $i = 6, 7$ (for the definition of \mathbf{M}_{inm} with $6 \leq i \leq 13$, which do not appear in Table 1, see [11]). Of these operators, \mathbf{M}_{inm} with $8 \leq i \leq 13$ are related to the $0\nu\beta\beta$ transitions which involve virtual Δ particles in nuclei, and they are induced by the operator \mathbf{M}_{2nm} interpreted as acting on two quarks in a nucleon or a Δ particle.

The new operators \mathbf{M}_{inm} with $14 \leq i \leq 25$ appear only in the expansion of \mathbf{M}_m . In the derivation of C_{mi} listed in Table 1, we have not taken into ac-

count the Δ mechanism yet. Under the same assumption of the non-relativistic constituent quark model about the Δ mechanism as was made in [11], the operators in Table 1 except \mathbf{M}_{inm} with $i = 2, 16, 17$ do not contribute when interpreted as acting on two quarks in a nucleon or a Δ particle. Since the relation $\mu_\beta = g_V = g_A = 1$ holds for the quark currents, we see $C_{mi} = 0$ for $i = 2, 16$. The only possible contribution of \mathbf{M}_{17nm} to \mathbf{M}_m is estimated to be about $m_e/2M$ of the Δ mechanism contributions to \mathbf{M}_λ and \mathbf{M}_η . Therefore we will neglect the Δ mechanism for the calculation of \mathbf{M}_m in the present work.

We calculate the nuclear matrix elements for $0_1^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decay of ^{76}Ge and ^{100}Mo using the method given in [11]. We describe the initial 0_1^+ and final 2_1^+ nuclear states in terms of the Hartree-Fock-Bogoliubov type wave functions which are obtained by variation after particle-number and angular-momentum projection [11–13]. For the case of ^{76}Ge decay, the calculation of the matrix elements M_i with $1 \leq i \leq 13$ has been performed in [11]. In the present work we calculate only the new ones with $14 \leq i \leq 25$ using the nuclear wave functions obtained in [11]. In order to calculate all M_i with $1 \leq i \leq 25$ for the ^{100}Mo decay, the nuclear wave functions of $^{100}\text{Mo}(0_1^+)$ and $^{100}\text{Ru}(2_1^+)$ are constructed in the same manner as in the case of the ^{76}Ge decay. Table 2 shows the calculated matrix elements M_m for the ^{76}Ge and ^{100}Mo decays as a sum of the products $C_{mi}M_i$. It should be noted that the matrix elements of the operators with rank 0 spin part, *i.e.* M_1 , M_4 , M_{14} and M_{15} have the dominant contributions to M_m . Table 3 summarizes the calculated matrix elements M_λ , M_η , M'_η and M_m for the ^{76}Ge and ^{100}Mo decays.

The differential rate for $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decay with the energy of one of the emitted electrons ϵ_1 and the angle between the two electrons θ_{12} can be written as

$$\frac{d^2W_{0\nu}}{d\epsilon_1 d\cos\theta_{12}} = a^{(0)}(\epsilon_1) + a^{(1)}(\epsilon_1)P_1(\cos\theta_{12}) + a^{(2)}(\epsilon_1)P_2(\cos\theta_{12}). \quad (9)$$

Each of the angular correlation coefficients $a^{(k)}(\epsilon_1)$ ($k = 0, 1, 2$) can be expressed as a sum of the products of an electron phase space factor and a second order monomial of $Z_{j\pm}$ defined in Eq. (2). The explicit form of $a^{(0)}(\epsilon_1)$, which yields $(\ln 2)/2$ times the right hand side of Eq. (1) upon integration over ϵ_1 , can be readily obtained by combining the relevant equations in [3]. Since the expressions for $a^{(1)}(\epsilon_1)$ and $a^{(2)}(\epsilon_1)$ are rather complicated, they will be given elsewhere. Numerical calculations show that $a^{(1)}(\epsilon_1)$ is dominated by a term with the factor $-(Z_{1+})^2 + Z_{2+}Z_{2-}$ times a positive function of ϵ_1 , whereas $a^{(2)}(\epsilon_1)$ by a term with the factor $2Z_{1+}Z_{1-} - (Z_{2+})^2 - (Z_{2-})^2$. For later reference we denote these two factors as $z^{(1)}$ and $z^{(2)}$, respectively.

Figure 1 shows the single electron spectra $dW_{0\nu}/d\epsilon_1 = 2a^{(0)}$ and the ratios of

the angular correlation coefficients $a^{(1)}/a^{(0)}$ and $a^{(2)}/a^{(0)}$ for the three limiting cases, (a) $\langle\lambda\rangle \neq 0$, (b) $\langle\eta\rangle \neq 0$ and (c) $\langle m_\nu\rangle \neq 0$. Since the coefficients $a^{(k)}(\epsilon_1)$ depend on the parameters $\langle\lambda\rangle$, $\langle\eta\rangle$ and $\langle m_\nu\rangle$ through $Z_{j\pm}$, the results shown in Fig. 1 are independent of nuclear models for the cases (a) and (c). We can also easily understand the signs of $a^{(1)}$ and $a^{(2)}$ from the relations $z^{(1)} = -(M_\lambda\langle\lambda\rangle)^2$ and $z^{(2)} = 2(M_\lambda\langle\lambda\rangle)^2$ for the case (a), and $z^{(1)} = -2(M_m\langle m_\nu\rangle/m_e)^2$ and $z^{(2)} = -4(M_m\langle m_\nu\rangle/m_e)^2$ for the case (c). On the other hand for the case (b), we obtain $z^{(1)} = -(M_\eta\langle\eta\rangle)^2 + (M'_\eta\langle\eta\rangle)^2$ and $z^{(2)} = 2(M_\eta\langle\eta\rangle)^2 - 2(M'_\eta\langle\eta\rangle)^2$, and consequently a cancellation between the contributions of M_η and M'_η occurs when these are of comparable magnitudes. This is just the case for the ^{100}Mo decay, but not for the ^{76}Ge decay where M'_η is much smaller than M_η so that there is no significant difference between the cases (a) and (b) in the angular correlation. It should also be noted in Fig. 1 that the single electron spectra for all the three cases (a), (b) and (c) have approximately the same shape. This is in contrast with the $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+$ decays where the spectrum for $\langle\lambda\rangle \neq 0$ is very different from those for $\langle m_\nu\rangle \neq 0$ or $\langle\eta\rangle \neq 0$ [2,3].

Using the matrix elements in Table 3 and the phase space integrals $F_{j\pm}$ calculated in [3], we can deduce from the experimental data $\tau_{1/2}^{0\nu}(0^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+) > 8.2 \times 10^{23}$ yr (90% C.L.) [14] for the ^{76}Ge decay the constraints on the right-handed current couplings and the effective neutrino mass listed in Table 4. As for the ^{100}Mo decay, the Osaka group has obtained the limit $\tau_{1/2}^{0\nu}(0^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+) > 1.4 \times 10^{22}$ yr (68% C.L.) [15] assuming $\langle\lambda\rangle \neq 0$. Because of the differences in the angular correlation as we see from Fig. 1, an analysis of the same raw experimental data might yield a half-life limit significantly different from the above value especially for the case $\langle\eta\rangle \neq 0$. However we assume here just the same half-life limit also for the cases $\langle\eta\rangle \neq 0$ and $\langle m_\nu\rangle \neq 0$ in order to compare the resulting constraints with those from the ^{76}Ge data.

The limits which can be deduced from the experimental bound $\tau_{1/2}^{0\nu}(0^+ \rightarrow 0^+) > 5.7 \times 10^{25}$ yr (90% C.L.) [16] on the $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+$ decay of ^{76}Ge using the nuclear matrix elements of [17] are $|\langle\lambda\rangle| < 3.8 \times 10^{-7}$, $|\langle\eta\rangle| < 2.2 \times 10^{-9}$ and $|\langle m_\nu\rangle| < 0.19$ eV. Comparing these limits with those of Table 4, we notice the considerable difference in the *absolute* sensitivities between the $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+$ and $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+$ decays, which reflects the smaller Q -value as well as the higher electron partial waves associated with the latter. However, it should be stressed here that the *relative* sensitivities to $\langle m_\nu\rangle$ and $\langle\eta\rangle$ are comparable in both cases. In other words, $\langle m_\nu\rangle = 1$ eV would give roughly the same decay rate as $\langle\eta\rangle = 10^{-8}$ in the $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+$ as well as in the $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+$ decays. At the same time it should also be noted that the $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+$ decay is relatively more sensitive to $\langle\lambda\rangle$.

In summary, we have calculated $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+$ $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay rates taking into account the recoil corrections to the nuclear currents. As a result, the expression for the decay probability becomes a quadratic form of not only the effective

coupling constants $\langle\lambda\rangle$ and $\langle\eta\rangle$ of the right-handed leptonic currents but also the effective neutrino mass $\langle m_\nu\rangle$ which would be totally absent without the inclusion of the recoil corrections. In other words, the recoil corrections give the *lowest* order contribution to the $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decay for the case where $\langle\lambda\rangle = \langle\eta\rangle = 0$ and $\langle m_\nu\rangle \neq 0$. Furthermore, by the numerical calculation of the relevant nuclear matrix elements, we have demonstrated that the *relative* sensitivities of $0^+ \rightarrow 2^+$ decays to $\langle m_\nu\rangle$ and $\langle\eta\rangle$ are comparable to those of $0^+ \rightarrow 0^+$ decays.

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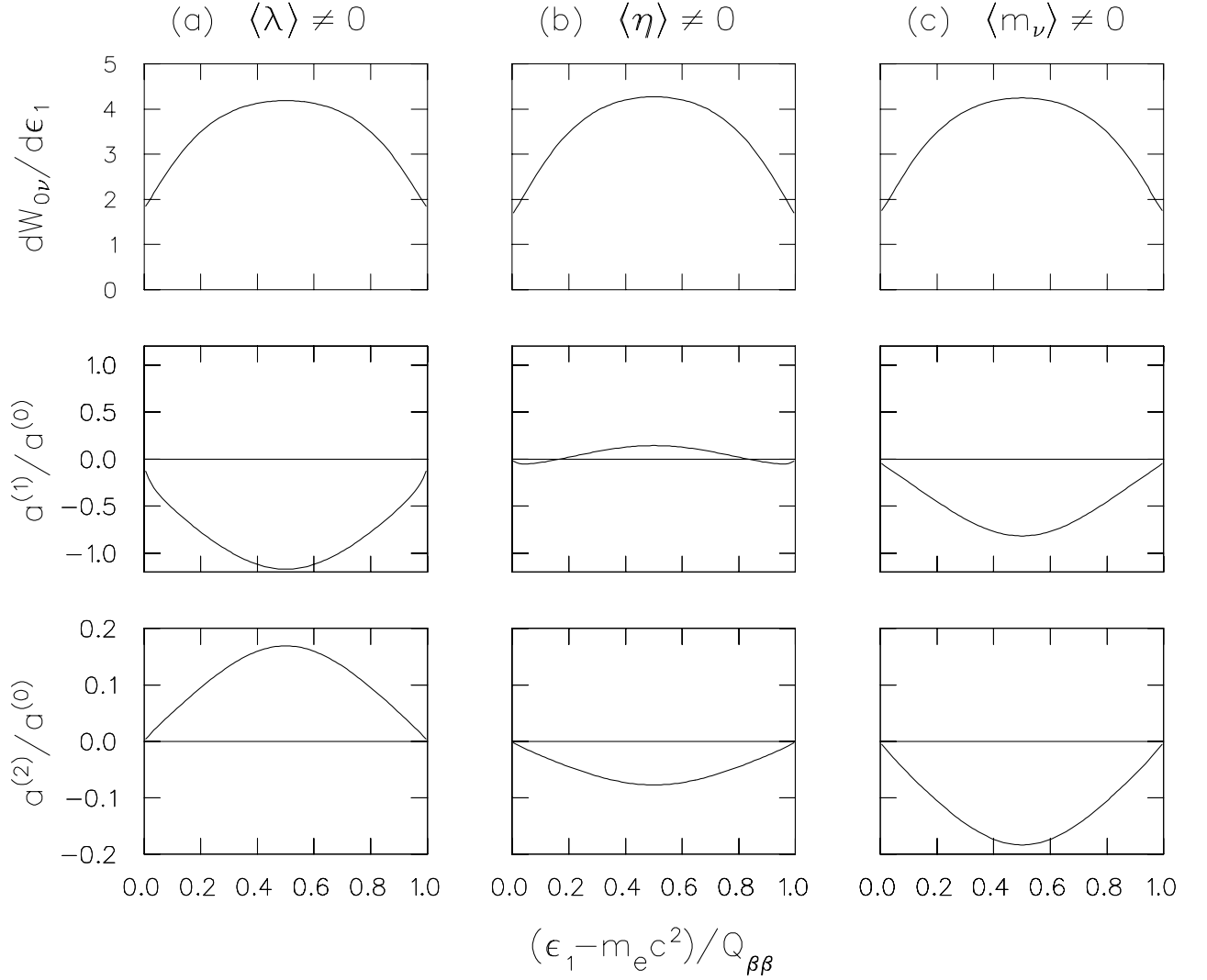


Fig. 1. Single electron spectrum $dW_{0\nu}/d\epsilon_1$ in arbitrary units and the ratios of the angular correlation coefficients $a^{(1)}/a^{(0)}$ and $a^{(2)}/a^{(0)}$ for the $0^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decay of ^{100}Mo . They are all plotted against the kinetic energy fraction of one of the two emitted electrons, where $Q_{\beta\beta}(0^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+) = 2.494$ MeV. Only one of the three lepton number violating parameters is assumed to be nonvanishing for each of the three cases: (a) $\langle \lambda \rangle \neq 0$, (b) $\langle \eta \rangle \neq 0$ and (c) $\langle m_\nu \rangle \neq 0$.

Table 1

The operators \mathbf{M}_{inm} and the coefficients C_{mi} , the latter in units of the electron-nucleon mass ratio m_e/M .

i	\mathbf{M}_{inm}	C_{mi}
1	$-\sqrt{3}h'\mathbf{S}_0\mathbf{y}_2$	$-\frac{1}{3}[\mu_\beta(g_V/g_A) + \frac{1}{2}]$
2	$h'\mathbf{S}_2$	$\frac{1}{6}[\mu_\beta(g_V/g_A) - 1]$
3	$h'[\mathbf{S}_2 \otimes \mathbf{y}_2]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{\sqrt{7}}{4\sqrt{3}}[\mu_\beta(g_V/g_A) - 1]$
4	$h'\mathbf{y}_2$	$\frac{1}{2}(g_V/g_A)^2$
5	$h'[\mathbf{S}_+ \otimes \mathbf{y}_2]^{(2)}$	$\frac{\sqrt{3}}{4\sqrt{2}}[\mu_\beta(g_V/g_A)^2 - (g_V/g_A)]$
14	$-\sqrt{3}h\mathbf{S}_0\mathbf{y}'_2$	$\frac{1}{3}$
15	$h\mathbf{y}'_2$	$-(g_V/g_A)^2$
16	$H\mathbf{S}_2$	$-\frac{1}{2}[\mu_\beta(g_V/g_A) - 1]$
17	$h\mathbf{S}_2\mathbf{y}'_0$	$-\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}$
18	$h[\mathbf{S}_2 \otimes \mathbf{y}'_1]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$
19	$h[\mathbf{S}_2 \otimes \mathbf{y}'_2]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{\sqrt{7}}{2\sqrt{3}}$
20	$h[\mathbf{S}_+ \otimes \mathbf{y}'_1]^{(2)}$	$\frac{1}{2\sqrt{2}}(g_V/g_A)$
21	$h[\mathbf{S}_+ \otimes \mathbf{y}'_2]^{(2)}$	$\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2\sqrt{2}}(g_V/g_A)$
22	$h[\mathbf{S}_1 \otimes \mathbf{Y}'_1]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{1}{4}$
23	$h[\mathbf{S}_1 \otimes \mathbf{Y}'_2]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{\sqrt{3}}{4}$
24	$h[\mathbf{S}_- \otimes \mathbf{Y}'_1]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{1}{4\sqrt{2}}(g_V/g_A)$
25	$h[\mathbf{S}_- \otimes \mathbf{Y}'_2]^{(2)}$	$-\frac{\sqrt{3}}{4\sqrt{2}}(g_V/g_A)$

Table 2

Calculated matrix elements M_m for the ^{76}Ge and ^{100}Mo decays. The entries are the values of the products $C_{mi}M_i$ and their sum M_m in units of 10^{-3}fm^{-1} .

i	^{76}Ge	^{100}Mo
1	-0.0229	-0.0077
2	0.0013	0.0003
3	0.0002	0.0008
4	-0.0017	-0.0011
5	-0.0003	0.0007
14	-0.0191	-0.0227
15	-0.0128	-0.0112
16	-0.0033	-0.0006
17	-0.0017	0.0000
18	-0.0028	0.0019
19	-0.0005	0.0001
20	0.0006	0.0005
21	0.0002	-0.0001
22	0.0020	-0.0000
23	0.0020	-0.0026
24	-0.0047	-0.0001
25	0.0012	-0.0010
sum	-0.0624	-0.0427

Table 3

Calculated matrix elements for the $0^+ \rightarrow 2_1^+ 0\nu\beta\beta$ decays of ^{76}Ge and ^{100}Mo in units of 10^{-3}fm^{-1} .

	M_λ	M_η	M'_η	M_m
^{76}Ge	1.81 ^a	13.37 ^a	0.18 ^a	-0.0624
^{100}Mo	-6.33	3.38	5.17	-0.0427

^a Ref. [11].

Table 4

Constraints on the right-handed current couplings and the effective neutrino mass.

	^{76}Ge	^{100}Mo
$ \langle\lambda\rangle $	$< 8.9 \times 10^{-4}$	$< 3.9 \times 10^{-4}$
$ \langle\eta\rangle $	$< 1.2 \times 10^{-4}$	$< 4.3 \times 10^{-4}$ ^a
$ \langle m_\nu \rangle $ [eV]	$< 1.0 \times 10^4$	$< 2.2 \times 10^4$ ^a

^a Assuming the same limit on $\tau_{1/2}^{0\nu}$ as the $\langle\lambda\rangle$ mode.